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Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4836th meeting

Sunday, 5 October 2003, 4.45 p.m.

New York

President	Mr. Negroponte	(United States of America)
Members	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Sow
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry

Agenda

Letter dated 5 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/939)

Letter dated 5 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/943)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

03-54194 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 4.45 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of October, I should like to take the opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of September 2003. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Sir Emyr Jones Parry for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 5 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/939)

Letter dated 5 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/943)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Israel in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Gillerman thereupon took a seat at the Council table.

The President: I should also like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 5 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

"On behalf of the members of the League of Arab States, I have the honour to request that the Security Council extend an invitation to His Excellency Mr. Yahya Mahmassani, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, to address the Council under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure in the course of the Council's consideration of the item entitled 'Letter dated 5 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council'."

That letter will be published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2003/941.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to Mr. Yahya Mahmassani.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now continue its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in response to the request contained in a letter dated 5 October from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) *spoke in Arabic*: Allow me at the outset to express to you, Sir, our thanks for immediately convening this meeting at the request of the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon and the Group of Arab States.

As this is the first open meeting of the month, we congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and wish you every success in your stewardship.

We also thank Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, and the members of his delegation for their leadership of the Council last month.

Allow me to begin by reading out the text of the letter addressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the Security Council. The letter has not yet been officially translated. Following my reading of the letter, I shall make my official statement on the item on the agenda.

"I wish to advise you that the Israeli air force, on the morning of Sunday, 5 October, violated the Lebanese and Syrian airspaces and committed an act of aggression by launching guided missiles inside the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. The target was a civilian site in the village of Ein Saheb, north-west of the capital, Damascus. That act of aggression caused physical damage.

"The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic informs the Council of this flagrant violation of Lebanese and Syrian air space and of this aggression against the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic in open defiance of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law, and constituting a serious new escalation; it requests an immediate meeting of the Security Council to consider this Israeli aggression against Syrian territory and to consider the measures that the Council must take to deter the Government of Israel from pursuing its provocative policy of aggression against Syria.

"By its persistent aggression against the Palestinians and by deliberately provoking the broadening of the scope of that aggression to include Syria and Lebanon, the present Government of Israel is underscoring that it is a Government of war, not a Government of peace.

"Syria is not incapable of establishing a balance of resistance and deterrence that would force Israel to reconsider its calculations. Syria has exercised maximum self-restraint, because it realizes that on many fronts Israel is provoking pretexts to export its current domestic crisis to the rest of the region, which would thus be exposed to further escalation and volatility.

"Syria, which is at present a member of the Security Council, believes that the Council is the most appropriate forum to address, condemn and halt this dangerous development, with a view to preventing a repetition of such acts; this development poses a threat to international peace and security and exposes the already deteriorating situation in the region to dire consequences that could spiral out of control."

That letter was signed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic.

I shall now make my statement on the item on the Council's agenda. Permit me, Mr. President, to thank you for convening this emergency meeting of the Security Council, in response to the request of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, to discuss the flagrant Israeli military aggression within the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, targeting a civilian site in the village of Ein Saheb north-west of Damascus and causing physical damage.

Let me also express our satisfaction at the statement issued by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, strongly deploring this act of aggression and expressing concern at the potential escalation of an already tense and difficult situation in the region.

This unwarranted aggression — in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, of international law and of the 1974 Disengagement Agreement between Syria and Israel — is a clear manifestation of an Israeli policy based on aggression and lack of respect for agreements. This Israeli aggression targeting a Syrian village is a true and precise embodiment of Israeli terrorism, while Israel falsely claims to be fighting terrorism and standing against it. Moreover, this terrorist act of aggression provides further proof that the massacres committed by Israel on the pretext of fighting so-called terrorism reflect a big lie and an irrational, foolish claim, all used in an attempt to justify the policy of colonialism and settlement-building in violation of all the principles of peace and security on which the United Nations was founded, and running counter to the peace process that began at Madrid in 1991.

The act of aggression that Israel committed against Syria this morning is part of a strategic policy adopted by the Israeli Government in order to escalate tension in the Middle East, at a time when the international community is pursuing efforts towards a comprehensive, just peace in the Middle East that would ensure peace and stability for all the peoples of the region.

It has become abundantly clear to the entire world that it is beyond belief that Syria — which has respected and complied with the mission of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force since 1974, as all the sponsors of the peace process and other world leaders can attest — or the powerless Palestinians — who lack weapons and who are languishing under Israeli occupation and harsh oppression — could take

any action posing a threat to anyone, especially as it is common knowledge that the Palestinian people lack an army and a military arsenal anything like those possessed by Israel.

For us, the question that comes immediately to mind is how Israel can persuade the entire world that it is a victim at a time when it forcibly occupies the territory of others, lays siege to them, demolishes their homes, uproots their crops and murders their children rather than joining them at the negotiating table to ensure the implementation of the legitimate rights of all sides, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law.

This flagrant Israeli aggression is no isolated incident. In fact, it was preceded by another Israeli violation, committed — without justification or provocation — on 2 January 2003 in the demilitarized zone, which resulted in the death of a Syrian soldier. The UNDOF report on this incident, following an extensive investigation, found that there was no justification for the crime and that Syria had exercised maximum restraint, which averted an escalation of the situation at that point.

It is strange that Israel should continue to violate international agreements and to flout the Charter of the United Nations, to the point where Arabs and many other people around the world have come to believe that Israel sees itself as above international law and as acting beyond the jurisdiction of the resolutions adopted by the Security Council.

It is very strange indeed that the Israeli Government, after several decades of occupation, bloodshed and the flouting of international law, does not recognize that the path to peace lies in Israel's implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict. All those resolutions remain unimplemented and unrespected by Israel.

Nonetheless, it is important to place on record that Israel's past performance with regard to its respect for international law and the resolutions of the United Nations is not in the least honourable. Israel has defied the United Nations and its resolutions from 1948 to today. General Assembly resolution 181 (II) on the Palestinian State has been dead letter since its adoption. Resolution 194 (III) on the return of Palestinian refugees has not been implemented except insofar as Israel has challenged and denied it. Resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which seek to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, are contested, misinterpreted and distorted by Israel.

On this basis, it is only logical that all Member States, with the exception of Israel — which has become a symbol of defiance of the United Nations and its resolutions — should debate international legality and the implementation of Security Council resolutions. The current Government of Israel, through its continued aggression against the Palestinians and its broadening of the scope of that aggression to include Syria and Lebanon, confirms de facto that it is a Government of war and not a Government of peace.

I wish to stress and reiterate here in the Security Council the contents of the letter addressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Syria to this Council, in which he emphasized that Syria is not incapable of establishing a balance of resistance and deterrence that would force Israel to revise its calculations. Syria has exercised maximum self-restraint because it recognizes that Israel is creating opportune pretexts with a view to exporting its current domestic crisis to the entire region, thus exposing it to further escalation and volatility.

Syria has come to the very heart of the house of legality, right here in the Security Council — which represents the hopes and aspirations of millions of Syrians and Arabs and the concerns of many millions more throughout the world who uphold the principles of international law — in order to condemn this act of aggression, which has no justification whatsoever, and to demonstrate once again to the entire world and from this forum our adherence to the United Nations system and its resolutions. In this regard, Syria has officially submitted the text of a draft resolution that responds to the challenges before us, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter. I would stress that the draft resolution on the table reflects the positions usually adopted by the Security Council in the face of similar acts of aggression and threats.

We are fully confident that all members of the Council will respond forthwith and stand up to this Israeli challenge in the context of their ongoing efforts to address any threat to international peace and security. Will the Council meet this new challenge? We are very hopeful that it will.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Gillerman (Israel): First, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. Let me also express to you my regret that your first meeting should be of this nature and take place on this day.

I wish also to express to Sir Emyr Jones Parry my great appreciation for his able and fair stewardship of the Security Council last month.

This meeting of the Security Council is being convened within hours of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which is the holiest day of the Jewish calendar. I deeply regret that the Council could not meet after this most important religious day so as to allow Israel to participate fully in the debate. I will, unfortunately, have to leave this meeting after I make my statement in order to observe this holy day.

Yesterday, a Palestinian suicide bomber entered a crowded beachfront restaurant in the port city of Haifa, murdering 19 innocent civilians and wounding at least 60 others. The restaurant — a symbol of Arab-Israeli coexistence, as is the city of Haifa — was frequented by Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel alike, and among the victims were four Israeli Arabs, three children and a little baby girl. Five victims were members of the same family and three were members of another family. Whole families were wiped out by that horrendous act, taking place on the Jewish sabbath on a quiet, peaceful beachfront in the city of Haifa.

Islamic Jihad, a terrorist organization that operates freely from Palestinian Authority territory and has headquarters in Damascus, Syria, proudly claimed responsibility for this massacre. Islamic Jihad is an organization committed to the destruction of Israel through holy war and which engages in the deliberate and widespread murder of innocents to that end. It opposes moderate Arab Governments and actively supports terrorist attacks against Western targets. There could not be a more obvious example of a terrorist organization.

The massacre in Haifa is the latest of over 40 terrorist atrocities committed by Islamic Jihad in the past few years. Among the attacks perpetrated by that organization were the massacre of 21 teenagers at a discotheque in Tel Aviv on 2 June 2001; the bombing of 5 June 2002 at the Meggido Junction, which killed 18 Israelis; the bombing of a commuter bus on 21 October 2002, which killed 14 Israelis; the attack on a shopping mall in the Israeli town of Afula on 19 May 2003, in which three civilians were killed and over 70 wounded; and the attack on 30 March 2003, in which a suicide bomber detonated his explosives at a café in Netanya, wounding 58 civilians.

The encouragement, safe harbour, training facilities, funding and logistical support offered by Syria to a variety of notorious terrorist organizations is a matter of public knowledge. Among the many terrorists group that operate and benefit from the auspices of the Syrian dictatorship are Islamic Jihad, Hamas, Hizbollah, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. It is well known that the Secretary General of Islamic Jihad, Ramadan Abdallah Shallah, is one of several terrorist leaders who operate freely in Damascus and receive immunity and support from the Assad regime.

Allow me to briefly detail, for the benefit of Council, the extent of support that Syria, as well as the regime in Iran, afford to terrorist organizations such as Islamic Jihad, which are engaged in the deliberate massacre of innocent civilians.

Safe harbour and training facilities are provided throughout Syria for terrorist organizations such as Islamic Jihad, Hamas and Hizbollah, both in separate facilities and in Syrian army bases. The Ein Saheb base, which was targeted in Israel's measured defensive operation today, is just one of those facilities sponsored by Syria and Iran. Recruits at camps such as Ein Saheb come from Islamic Jihad, Hamas and other terrorist groups. They are taught how to assemble bombs, conduct kidnapping, prepare suicide belts, gather intelligence and establish terrorist cells. Some have also received aviation instruction. Recruits training at those camps are slated to return to Palestinian Authority territory and other areas to set up cells and conduct terrorist operations.

Syria has itself facilitated and directed acts of terrorism by coordination and briefings via phone and Internet and by calling activists to Damascus for consultations and briefings. Three such operatives — Tarek Az Aldin, Ali Saffuri and Taabat Mardawi — have been identified under investigation as specifically designated liaisons for relaying instructions between officials in Damascus and terrorist cells in the West Bank and Gaza. Mr. Mardawi himself has admitted

involvement in many attacks, including a bus bombing in Haifa in May 2001, a suicide attack at a restaurant in Kiryat Motzkin in August of that year and an attack on a bus near Nazareth in March 2002.

Another example comes from an intelligence report provided by the Head of the Palestinian Preventative Security Apparatus on 31 October 2001, which asserts that Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hizbollah were meeting in Damascus "in order to increase their joint acitivity — with the aid of Iranian money". Instructions are also given to halt terrorist activity when it suits Syrian or Iranian interests to avoid the spotlight, such as following the terrorist attacks of 11 September in the United States. It is very strange that Syria decided to be in the spotlight today and actually put itself in the dock on this very day, after these actions.

Iran, through the use of the Syrian and Palestinian banking systems, sustains a systematic money transfer system, and large sums of money have been transferred to Islamic Jihad as well as other terrorists organizations through Damascus for the planning and perpetration of attacks. Mr. Shallah himself, the Secretary-General of Islamic Jihad, is known to have transferred funds in the hundreds of thousands of dollars from Damascus to the individual accounts of Islamic Jihad operatives such as Bassani ak-Saadi, who is responsible for Islamic Jihad financing in Jenin.

Syria uses its State-run media and official institutions to glorify and encourage suicide bombings against civilians in restaurants, schools, commuter buses and shopping malls. To mention but a few examples, Radio Damascus — far from being a free radio — in a broadcast on 9 May 2002 lauded "the wonderful and special suicide attacks which were executed by some of the sons of the Palestinian nation". In another State-run announcement on 1 January 2002, Damascus Radio declared "The entire world knows that Syria, its political leadership and its Arab people...have turned Syrian Arab soil into a training camp, a safe haven and an arms depot for the Palestinian revolutionaries." And on 13 May 2002, President Bashar Assad himself announced in reference to so-called acts of resistance "If I was not President of Syria I wouldn't hesitate to participate in them." This was not said by Osama bin Laden or by Saddam Hussain, but by a President of a State that is a member of this Council. Syria has also played host to a number of conferences in which senior terrorist operatives from Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other organizations meet.

Syria has facilitated the transfer of arms to Palestinian terrorist organizations such as Islamic Jihad by allowing the transfer of sophisticated weapons from Iran to Hizbollah through Syrian territory. Hizbollah, itself a vicious terrorist organization, has then sought to smuggle those arms to Palestinian terrorist groups, as was evidenced in the Karine A arms shipment and similar incidents.

These are just a few examples of the extent and nature of the involvement of the Syrian regime in the deliberate murder of innocent civilians. Each and every one of these acts constitutes a grave violation of international law and Security Council resolutions, as well as a threat to international peace and security. There are few better exhibits of State sponsorship of terrorism than the one provided by the Syrian regime.

Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter — which in act of the highest hypocrisy Syria itself voted for — makes absolutely clear that States must prevent acts of terrorism and refrain from any form of financing, support, safe harbour for or toleration of terrorist groups. Syrian complicity in and responsibility for suicide bombings are as blatant as they are repugnant. The membership of this arch-sponsor of terrorism in the Council is an unbearable contradiction and an embarrassment to the United Nations. For Syria to ask for a Council debate is comparable only to the Taliban calling for such a debate. It would be laughable, if it was not so sad.

And yet, members of the Council and the United Nations can hardly be surprised at this shameless act of hypocrisy by the Syrian regime. This is the same regime that speaks so often of occupation while it brutally occupies the neighbouring territory of Lebanon. It is the same regime that speaks of international law and human rights while it subjugates its people under a repressive and primitive dictatorship, violating countless international obligations. It is the same regime that supported the Saddam Hussain regime in Iraq in violation of Security Council resolutions and that to this day facilitates the infiltration of terrorists to attack civilian and military targets in Iraqi territory. And it is this same despotic regime that speaks so freely of double standards at the United Nations. Syria would do well to take a hard

look at the mirror and count itself fortunate that it has not yet, for unfortunate reasons, been the subject of concerted international action as part of the global campaign against terrorism — not yet.

The Syrian delegate speaks a great deal about so-called resistance. Perhaps he can tell us precisely, without his familiar diplomatic word games and misrepresentations, how exactly the murder of children and babies in a restaurant is an act of legitimate resistance. Or perhaps he could tell us how the Syrians themselves have dealt with resistance, such as in the case of Hama, in which some 10,000 Syrian civilians were murdered by the Syrian armed forces.

Israel's measured defensive response to the horrific suicide bombings against a terrorist training facility in Syria is a clear act of self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter. Those actions come after Israel has exercised tremendous restraint despite countless acts of terrorism that have claimed hundreds of innocent lives, for which Syria bears direct and criminal responsibility. It comes after Israel and the international community as a whole have repeatedly called on Syria to end its support of terrorism and finally comply with international law. And it is designed to prevent further armed attacks against Israeli civilians in which Syria is complicit, with a view to encouraging Syria to resolve its dispute through bilateral negotiations in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as it is legally required to do. This is not a hypothetical question. Many States members of the Organization and of the Council have been faced with terrorism of far less intensity and have responded with far less restraint and far less concern for human life. And yet the Security Council has not seen fit to scrutinize their conduct. Indeed, on certain occasions the Council has specifically endorsed such defensive measures.

If there is a double standard in this Organization, it is that while some States are afforded the right to protect their citizens, Israel too often is sent the message that its citizens are not worthy of protection. If there is a double standard, it is that some States are able to support terrorism with impunity, while those defending against it are called to account. If there is a double standard, it is Syria sitting at the Council table and raising one hand to vote against terror and the other to perpetrate and initiate terror around the world. For the sake of peace and the reputation of the Council, let there be no such double standard today.

In the face of the rejectionism, aggression and terrorist sponsorship of the Syrian regime, together with Iran and the Palestinian Authority, what would the international community have us do? Like any State faced with such a critical and prolonged threat, Israel must exercise its inherent right and obligation to defend its citizens. What can we tell the Arab and Israeli mothers of children murdered in this weekend's attack in Haifa? Should we say, "We could have prevented the death of your son or daughter. We could have stopped a terrorist from walking into your town, your school, your home, your bedroom — but our hands were tied"? Israel remains committed to a peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict and is ready to make painful compromises to that end. But no peace can come while terrorism prospers. No negotiations can bring progress, while our citizens die on the streets.

Today, on the very eve of the Day of Atonement and the thirtieth anniversary of the Egyptian-Syrian aggression that initiated the Yom Kippur War, we call on members of the Council to come to the aid of the victims of terrorism, not of its sponsors. Syria deserves no support for its complicity in murder, and the Council would commit an unforgivable act of moral blindness were it to act otherwise. The time has come for the Council, which adopted resolution 1373 (2002), and which has been at the forefront of the global counter-terrorism campaign, to hold to account a brutal dictatorship that is world-renowned for adopting terrorism as its primary tool. The world is watching. And today, more than on any other day, God is watching too.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Bahrain, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, the Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain), Mr. Rodriguez Parrilla (Cuba), Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Al-Hussein (Jordan), Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait), Mr. Kronfol (Lebanon), Mr. El-Treki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Bennouna (Morocco), Mr. Al-Sameen (Oman), Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar), Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Hashi (Somalia), Mr. Ersa (Sudan), Mr. Hachami (Tunisia), Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) and Mr. Alsaidi (Yemen) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should also like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 5 October 2003 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2003/942, and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the forthcoming meeting of the Security Council to be held today, 5 October 2003, regarding the letter dated 5 October 2003 from the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the President of the Security Council."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the current debate, in accordance with the rules of procedure and previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine), took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): As this is the first formal meeting of the Security Council for this month, may I take this opportunity to extend to you, Sir, the warm felicitations of the delegation of Pakistan on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the current month. We will extend our full cooperation to you to ensure the success of your presidency.

I would also like to express my delegation's congratulations and admiration to Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for a successful presidency last month.

The Security Council has been established to defend a world order based on the principles and purposes of the Charter. Our Charter prescribes strict rules for the use of force by Member States, and this is envisaged in two circumstances only. The first is in exercise of the right of self-defence against a direct act of aggression or use of force; the second is the collective use of force under Article 42 of the Charter, with the explicit authorization of the Security Council.

The attack perpetrated by Israel against the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic on 5 October did not meet these strict requirements set out in the Charter with regard to the use of force. This was an arbitrary attack, and in legal and political terms it is clearly a violation of the Charter. It is also a violation of the several resolutions that the Security Council has adopted on the issue of the Middle East — resolutions 242 (1967), and 338 (1973), 350 (1974), 1397 (2002) and others.

We welcome the fact that the Government of Syria, instead of retaliating against this wanton attack on its territory, has chosen to approach the Security Council for redress. The Security Council must commend Syria's self-restraint and condemn the Israeli attack against Syria's territory.

A few weeks ago, the Secretary-General warned Member States about the danger of the misuse of the "T" word — namely, terrorism — for actions by States designed to suppress peoples and to achieve their own partisan objectives. We believe that the response of Israel in this case is one such example of the exploitation of the campaign against terrorism for other purposes. The problems that Israel faces are problems that arise from its illegal occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories. The answer to individual acts of terrorism is not State terrorism, nor is it wanton attacks against other countries, in violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. State power must distinguish between acts of terrorism and the legitimate struggle of peoples under foreign occupation for self-determination and liberation.

Pakistan has officially condemned Israel's attack against Syrian territory as a violation of international law. We urge the Council to speedily adopt a decision to condemn that military aggression and to uphold the

sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Today's meeting is taking place due to certain events of grave concern to us. The situation in the Middle East during recent weeks has obligated us to call for prudence and restraint. Any act that will unleash a spiral of violence must be rejected. In that context, we would like firmly to condemn yesterday's attack in Haifa, which we believe was completely odious and reprehensible, regardless of the date on which it was committed. However, that cannot cause us to overlook or minimize the extreme gravity of the attack perpetrated against Syria today. That attack is clearly a patent violation of international law. Accordingly, it is something we believe to be worthy of condemnation. I should also like to appeal for moderation to be exercised in the Middle East. The parties should also understand that reprisals only lead to a dire aggravation of the situation.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, please allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. China will fully cooperate with you in order to carry out the Council's work this month. I would also like to thank Sir Emyr Jones Parry, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for successfully presiding over the work of the Council during September.

China is gravely concerned about the latest developments in the Middle East situation. We strongly condemn the suicide bombing of 4 October, which resulted in many innocent civilian casualties. We oppose any measures that may threaten the peace process between Israel and Palestine. We strongly urge both sides to cease acts of violence and any other acts that may exacerbate tensions. We hope that they will return to the proper track of settling disputes through negotiation as soon as possible.

We also condemn Israel's air attack against Syria. Israel's action is a violation of the norms of international law. We are deeply concerned about the negative effect of that action on the situation in the Middle East. We call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint in order to avoid any actions that may lead to further aggravating tensions in the overall situation in the Middle East.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): I would like to use this occasion to offer you every best wish for your presidency, Mr. President, as well as to affirm the United Kingdom's commitment to offer you every support.

This is the first meeting since the Haifa bombing, so I must begin by condemning strongly the actions that took place yesterday, and to express our condolences to the families of those killed and maimed. I note that Islamic Jihad has claimed responsibility for that action.

Let me be clear that Israel's action today is unacceptable and represents an escalation. Israel should not allow its justified anger at continuing terrorism to lead to actions that undermine both the peace process and, we believe, Israel's own interests. But we have to recognize that terrorists are continuing to attack Israel and that they are being permitted to do so. There is a heavy responsibility on all those who are in a position to act against terrorism to do so. That has been affirmed by the Security Council many times, and perhaps most clearly in resolution 1373 (2001).

Allowing impunity to those committed to using terror as a political instrument serves only to undermine peace and to prevent progress in the Middle East peace process. The United Kingdom believes that lasting security can only be assured by a successful peace process, as was stressed at the conclusion of the Quartet meeting held here in New York on 25 September. We believe that all sides should exercise restraint and now reinforce their efforts to implement the road map. In the next day, the Security Council should do all it can to help bring that about. We will all have to reflect carefully on the best message we can now send in order that we reinforce the prospects of the road map, and do so at a precarious moment in the Middle East.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Since this is our first statement in the Council this month, we should like to join other delegations in wishing you success, Sir, in your presidency of the Council.

We also thank the Ambassador Jones Parry of the United Kingdom for his very skilful conduct of the Council's work in September.

The course of events in the Middle East is of growing concern and alarm. Following the large-scale terrorist act in Haifa, the Israeli air force, for the first time in many years, sent missile strikes against Syrian territory near Damascus, targeting what Israel claimed to be a training camp for the extremist organization Islamic Jihad. It left open the possibility of other attacks against terrorists wherever they may be.

It is very clear that such acts lead to increased confrontation in the Middle East, are fraught with peril for other countries and could trigger even more dramatic consequences, both for the very tense situation in the region and for international security as a whole. Russia urges all parties to the conflict to show maximum restraint and to act in a balanced and responsible way so as to avert any further escalation in the spiral of violence and to prevent regional destabilization, the tragic results of which would be difficult to foresee.

The ongoing escalation of violence in the Middle East requires more energetic action on the part of the international community in order to prevent an even more dangerous aggravation of the situation. It is important now to press the parties to the conflict to halt the confrontation as soon as possible and to restore the political process, the final goal of which is a comprehensive settlement in the region. To that end, what we need above all is to unblock the way forward on the road map, to which there is no alternative in finding a solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. The Palestinians and Israelis alike must resume their dialogue and begin to carry out their obligations under the road map.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): Like other delegations, mine would like to welcome you, Sir, in the presidency of the Security Council and to assure you of its support this month.

I would also like to thank Ambassador Jones Parry for the very effective and elegant way in which he did his job as President of the Council last month.

As the German Chancellor said after a meeting with President Mubarak, the action against Syria is not acceptable. The German Government feels that a violation of the sovereignty of a neighbouring State does not facilitate peace and stability in the region and that such action makes the Middle East conflict even more complicated. We, like other delegations, also condemn the suicide bombing that occurred in Haifa and that killed 19 people and injured many more. Our condolences go to the bereaved families of the victims. These acts of terrorism have to be stopped and whoever can exercise influence to that effect should do so.

We are very concerned about the deteriorating situation in the Middle East. We feel that we have to break the vicious circle of violence and counter-violence. De-escalation, we feel, is possible only by a return to implementing the road map as proposed by the Quartet. There is no alternative to the road map for finding a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and for creating peace and stability in the Middle East.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): Since this is the first time I am taking the floor this month, like my colleagues who have spoken before me I should like to wish you great success, Sir, in your duties.

I also thank Ambassador Jones Parry for the way in which he conducted our work last month.

We are deeply concerned by the deterioration of the situation and the serious danger of rising tension. We condemn violence from wherever it may come. It is unacceptable and politically ineffective, kills innocent people, obscures the political horizon and can only aggravate the crisis.

The Israeli operation today that targeted a site near Damascus is a grim business and an unacceptable violation of international law and the rules of sovereignty. In a Middle East situation that has already been made precarious by such crises, it is the responsibility of all, particularly of States in the region, to refrain from increasing stability and tension. Any act of terrorism is unjustifiable and should be condemned. Having said that, the fight against terrorism to which France is firmly committed must be undertaken in the context of respect for international law. That is essential.

I stress once again that the situation in the Middle East is most alarming. In such difficult circumstances, we appeal to all parties — particularly the Israelis, Palestinians and Syrians — to allow reason to prevail over the threat of escalation. There can be no lasting security without peace. Peace can prevail only through negotiation, not by the force of arms. It is essential that the opportunity for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement be sought in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. The road map, which

contains Syrian and Lebanese tracks, must be given a chance.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (spoke in French): I should like to extend my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to assure you of our full cooperation.

I should also like to thank Ambassador Jones Parry for his skilful presidency last month.

Bulgaria categorically condemns the terrorist act carried out yesterday in Haifa, as we always do on such occasions. It is important for all those who make such acts possible to do their utmost to end them by ceasing all material and moral support to them. The murder of an innocent child is particularly repugnant.

Bulgaria believes that Israel's armed action against the Syrian Arab Republic is not in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations or with international law. Like other delegations, we consider it to have been an unacceptable act. The only resolution of the Middle East crisis — which has of late grown more serious — lies in the implementation of the road map devised by the Quartet, as the Quartet itself noted in its statement following its most recent meeting in New York.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We might have preferred a different meeting of the Security Council to congratulate you, Ambassador Negroponte, on your assumption of the presidency, to offer you our best wishes and to assure you of our cooperation, as well as to thank Ambassador Jones Parry for his excellent work during the month of September.

Events in the Middle East in recent hours prompt Chile to make the following statement. First of all, we condemn the Israeli air force bombing on Syrian territory, which is an outrage against international law and the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. Such conduct is unacceptable and dangerous, because it can widen the conflict and pose additional threats to international peace and security in the Middle East.

Similarly, Chile firmly and harshly condemns the repugnant terrorist attack in Haifa, which killed 19 innocent people and injured some 50 others. Such violence against civilians can never be justified. Chile has condemned in the past and will continue to denounce and condemn all acts of terrorism, whatever their origin. We reject any attempt to justify such acts.

Suicide attacks followed by the destruction of civilian homes, air strikes and further acts of terror constitute a vicious circle of violence that must stop. We appeal to both Syria and Israel to be prudent. We call on them to exercise all due restraint in order to avoid the taking of even graver decisions that would escalate the violence.

The international community views with alarm these developments and their impact on the peace process and the road map on which the Quartet is seeking to make progress for the benefit of the majority, who, we believe, seek peace and coexistence among Israel, Palestine, Syria and all other neighbours in the region.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Like the Permanent Representative of Chile, I am sorry, Sir, that this should be the first Security Council meeting for the month of October, at which we express our pleasure at seeing you assume the Council presidency. Yet we express to you our confidence and support. Further, our thanks go to Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry of the United Kingdom. He had just joined the Council, but he conducted our work most effectively, wisely and prudently.

Let me begin by conveying my country's condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the suicide bombing that took place yesterday in a seaside restaurant in Haifa. Nothing can justify such an attack against innocent civilians. It was yet another expression of extremism that contributed nothing to furthering the Palestinian cause. And yet again the Council is obliged to condemn such acts and appeal to the Palestinian Authority genuinely to work to combat and prevent such attacks.

The reprisals taken by Israel in consequence of that attack are equally reprehensible. Israel gains nothing by such reprisals; they only contribute to the spiral of violence of which Israel and its citizens are the victims. The Israeli attack on Syrian territory was a clear violation of the United Nations Charter; it was a grave act that endangers international peace and security.

In that connection, my delegation notes with optimism Syria's decision not to respond militarily to the aggression. It is our expectation that, as this matter

has been brought before the Security Council, it will follow a course permitting the easing of tension. We also appeal to Israel to channel its own legitimate indignation into the appropriate course, as set out in the Charter. The Security Council must be the forum in which to ease and resolve disputes that threaten peace. We hope that prudence, moderation, reason and international law will prevail and that this escalation will not lead to an even more serious spiral of violence. The consequences for the region and the rest of the world would be horrific.

We support the efforts of the Quartet and urge its members to redouble their efforts to secure peace in the Middle East. Once again, my country considers that it is only the establishment of a Palestinian State can lay a firm foundation for peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): Permit me first to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency for the month of October. It is regrettable that this should be the first meeting of your presidency, but the matter before us is a situation of which the Council had to be seized and on which it must adopt a position. I am sure that, under your guidance, we will continue to have a very fruitful month of deliberations. I would also like to seize this opportunity to extend to Sir Emyr Jones Parry my congratulations for his very skilful stewardship of the Council during the past month.

I note with regret that the deplorable acts of war that we are examining this afternoon — which represent a very serious escalation of violence in a situation that is already dangerously affecting world peace — namely the direct strikes on Damascus and also the recent attacks in Haifa, are taking place in a context in which a relatively shaky peace already prevails. The situation we are examining demonstrates the real fragility of the situation and the need for a more comprehensive peace agreement for the entire Middle East region.

We need to see a real commitment by the parties to this conflict to put a stop to the logic of violence. Violence is not stopped with violence. We reiterate our appeal to the States in the region to create a climate conducive to progress in the implementation of the road map, which, alone, will bring a stop to the building of walls, or to the acts that took place over the weekend in Haifa and in Damascus. My delegation unequivocally condemns such acts. A clear commitment to peace and moderation in the Middle East is long overdue.

At the heart of this situation clearly lies the unresolved Palestinian question. In the face of failure to achieve a satisfactory conclusion, with implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, and progress on the road map, the Council must continue to make unceasing demands that true advances be made.

I would like to end by saying that the resolution that we have been presented this afternoon clearly calls for a position to be adopted by our Council, and we shall put ours forward following consultations with my authorities in the capital.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of our Council and to assure you of our full cooperation. We are very grateful also to Ambassador Jones Parry for his excellent conduct of our work during September.

Allow me to express my delegation's appreciation for the wisdom you demonstrated in the prompt organization of this public meeting of our Council in the face of the escalation of tensions in the Middle East following the violation of Syria's air space by the Israel Government and the extension of extrajudicial State violence to that neighbouring Arab State.

Nothing — absolutely, nothing — can justify such an act, which is contrary to all acceptable standards of international conduct, and whose sole purpose is to extend the strategy of chaos already imposed on the people of Palestine to all the neighbouring Arab Islamic States. Such an act violates all the relevant Security Council resolutions designed to bring about a negotiated political peace settlement to the Israeli-Arab crisis.

Thirty years after the signing of the disengagement agreement of 30 May 1974 between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, Israel's unjustified attack on Syria is a particularly serious and alarming threat to international peace and security and is liable to jeopardize the implementation of the Quartet's road map, whose ultimate goal is to overcome the problems raised by the cycle of violence and to safeguard the peace process in the Middle East.

My country, the Republic of Guinea, firmly condemns the use of force and violence and,

particularly, terrorism as a means of political and diplomatic negotiation or of pressure to advance political views. We condemn terrorism in all its forms, including in the form of State terrorism. In that respect, we have condemned the terrorist attacks committed on the eve of Yom Kippur in Haifa, which struck innocent Israeli citizens.

Such blind violence can only damage the noble Palestinian cause, which my country has always supported. The Israeli armed reprisal is a disproportionate reaction stemming from a political will to destroy the peace efforts in the region of the international Islamic community. We firmly condemn this military attack, and we express our concern at the attempt to illegally expand the zone of conflict and destabilize the entire Middle East.

My country commends the measured and very responsible reaction of the Syrian Government. In promoting the path to dialogue and appealing to the conscience of Security Council members, Syria is setting an encouraging and laudable example.

We believe yet again that we must call on the Israeli Government to show more self-restraint and moderation and comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions. In that context, my delegation fully supports the draft resolution submitted by Syria. That draft is moderate, and could be a positive and beneficial signal to the peoples of the Middle East and the world.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council during October and to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation. I would also like to express our appreciation to the permanent representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry, for his innovative presidency last month.

We learned with consternation of the outbreak of violence that has recurred in the Middle East over the past two days, which has been marked by the attack in Haifa and the raids into Syrian territory.

All of these acts are serious violations of the terms of the Quartet's road map, of the ceasefire agreement of 1974 between Israel and Syria and of international law. Such acts are dangerous because they jeopardize the prospects for a speedy return to peace and security in the region — prospects that are already very weak. Cameroon has always condemned all acts of terrorism. We believe that there can be no justification for such acts and that no cause can legitimize them. Similarly, Cameroon, which is resolutely committed to combating that scourge, is convinced that our common struggle must be undertaken with full respect for fundamental human rights and international law.

Faced with this dangerous escalation, we call on all of the parties to demonstrate a great deal of restraint at this extremely difficult and delicate time. We call on them to refrain from any initiative that might exacerbate the situation. We call on them to respect their commitments — contained both in the road map and in earlier agreements. Finally, we call on them to put an end to the cycle of violence in the Middle East so as to facilitate a resumption of dialogue.

We urgently appeal to the international negotiators, in particular the Quartet, immediately to take actions aimed at the containment of the situation and to accelerate the taking of bold steps, which the Secretary-General referred to on 26 September. Such bold steps, in keeping with the road map, should deal simultaneously with the fundamental needs of the two parties, namely, security for Israel and an end to occupation for Palestine.

It goes without saying that if such measures are not taken we will run the risk, as the Secretary-General warned us, of having to pay a heavy price. Recent events make clear the urgent need for what Cameroon terms comprehensive disarmament in the Middle East — a disarmament policy aimed in particular at cultural disarmament, which would eradicate war psychosis and the violence in people's hearts and show the various parties that their survival depends, not on the results of war, but on the outcome of negotiations.

We have just received a copy of a draft resolution. Immediately after the end of this public meeting we will transmit it to our capital and await instructions.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the United States.

We call on all sides to avoid heightening the tension in the Middle East and to think carefully about the consequences of their actions. We were notified this morning of the Israeli action in Syria last night, after

the event. This morning, at 9 a.m., President Bush called Israeli Prime Minister Sharon and conveyed our condolences for the victims of Saturday's terrorist attack at a restaurant in Haifa, which claimed the lives of 19 Israelis, including three children and five Israeli Arabs, and wounded dozens more. The United States and the Government of Israel agreed that it is important to avoid actions that could lead to a further heightening of tension in the Middle East.

The United States believes that Syria is on the wrong side of the war on terrorism. We have been clear of the need for Syria to cease harbouring terrorist groups. Specific directions for terrorist acts continue to be issued from terrorist groups based in Syria. During his visit to Damascus this year, Secretary of State Colin Powell told the Government of Syria that this was unacceptable and intolerable. I myself made this point to Syrian Foreign Minister Al-Shara' in June 2002 in this Chamber.

We believe that it is in Syria's interest and in the broader interests of Middle East peace for Syria to stop harbouring and supporting the groups that perpetrate terrorist acts such as the one that occurred in Haifa yesterday.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

As a measure to optimize the use of our time and in order to allow delegations to take the floor as quickly as possible, I will not individually invite speakers to take a seat at the Council or invite them to resume their seats at the side of the Council Chamber. When a speaker is taking the floor, the Conference Officer will seat the next speaker on the list at the table.

I thank representatives for their understanding and cooperation.

I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations.

Mr. Mahmassani (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I am convinced that you will guide the work of the Council with wisdom and skill. I would also like to thank your predecessor, Sir Emyr Jones Parry, for his work at the helm of the Council last month.

The Council of the Arab League held an emergency meeting today at the level of permanent representative to consider the consequences of the repugnant Israeli attack against Syrian territory. The League considers that this attack constitutes an escalation that threatens international peace and security, as well as representing a deterioration in the situation such that it could spin out of control and involve the entire region in a cycle of violence. It calls upon the United Nations to discharge its responsibilities to preserve international peace and security and to consider this question under Chapter VII of the Charter.

The Council of the Arab League denounces this attack and considers that it is yet another flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and of the principles of international law. Israel is fully responsible for all consequences that may result from such aggression.

The Council reaffirms its support for and solidarity with the Syrian Arab Republic and any measures that it may adopt in self-defence against such aggression. The Council calls upon the Security Council to prevent Israel from continuing such provocative acts. We call for the cessation of State terrorism and Israeli measures against the Palestinian people, Syrian and Lebanon in order to ensure that the entire region does not become inflamed and experience even greater insecurity.

This attack reaffirms the aggressive nature of Israel and the fact that the Israeli Government rejects any peace initiative. Israeli aggression against Syria is part and parcel of Israeli policy to continue the occupation of the Syrian Golan and the other occupied Arab territories. It confirms that Israel is not devoted to a just and lasting peace throughout the Middle East. It is Israeli politics and its policy in continuing settlements and annexation of Arab territories.

This attack acerbates the situation. It will have a serious fallout that will make any peaceful settlement of the conflict impossible. I call on the Security Council to discharge its duty and see what can be done now, because Israel works beyond the range of legality as enshrined in all international resolutions. The Security Council's double standards are enabling Israel to continue to act outside international law, as if it enjoys total impunity. The Security Council has

adopted 37 resolutions that Israel has not implemented. Israel has not implemented any of those resolutions.

At the very heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict we find Israel's occupation of Arab territories. Israel is trying to distract people from this truth. Israel is presenting its acts as if they are a way to eliminate terrorism. That is naive. Israeli occupation of Arab territories is at the very heart of this problem. It will remain unsolved until Israel abides by international legality and leaves those occupied Arab territories. Measures and punishments exacted by Israel against the Palestinian people do not bring peace to the region; they lead to violence and continuing deterioration of the situation. That situation can be solved only by sitting around the negotiating table, and Israel must implement the Security Council resolutions, the 2002 proposal from Beirut and the principle of land for peace.

The President: I now call on the Ambassador of Lebanon.

Mr. Kronfol (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me first, Mr. President, to express to you my hope that your presidency of the Council this month will be successful in achieving peace and security in the whole world, especially in our region. Let me thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for his skilful presidency.

At the beginning I wish to state that my Government today addressed a letter to the President of the Security Council and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in which it requested the convening of an immediate meeting of the Security Council to consider the violation by Israeli military planes of the Lebanese airspace in order to strike a site inside the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. Our understanding now is that the Secretariat is in the process of translating that letter from Arabic so that it may be circulated to all members of the Council. I request that that fact be reflected in the official records of this meeting.

I will now read the text of that letter.

"His Excellency, the President of the Security Council, Ambassador John Negroponte

"We would like to advise you, Sir, that in the morning of Sunday, 5 October 2003, Israeli military planes violated the airspace of Lebanon in order to strike a site inside the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. On the same date, at noon, eight other Israeli military planes violated the airspace in southern and northern Lebanon.

"It is to be noted that despite the repeated positions of the Secretary-General, and notwithstanding the announcements and warnings by his representative in Lebanon, the Israeli violations continue without any grounds or justifications.

"The most recent of those violations is the use of Lebanese airspace in order to commit an act of aggression against a sister neighbouring State. That action consititutes a serious escalation of the situation and a new development in the method of Israeli attacks.

"On this basis Lebanon requests that the Security Council meet immediately to examine these acts of aggression and to take proper measures to deter Israel. Those violations, especially the most recent, constitute blatant aggression against the Blue Line, which is sponsored by the United Nations in southern Lebanon. They also endanger stability along that line and represent Israel's intention to export its current dilemmas in the occupied territories to other places.

"As it draws the attention of this Council to this grave situation, Lebanon is fully confident in the measures the Council will take to condemn Israel and to deter it from similar acts of aggression that would lead to dire consequences that would destabilize the current situation along the Blue Line as well as seriously endanger peace and stability in the region."

That letter, dated 5 October 2003 from Beirut, is from the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Expatriate Lebanese, Mr. Michael Suraha.

Lebanon requested a meeting of the Security Council due to Israel's excessive violations of Lebanon's air space and of the Blue Line arrangements sponsored by the United Nations in southern Lebanon. Those actions led to an act aggression against a Member State of the United Nations and current member of the Security Council, in addition to being an act of aggression against a sisterly State with whom my country has the closest of relations.

The Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law, which all of us must respect, warn against any act of aggression by any Member State against another irrespective of the reason. They also hold that a State should first resort to the Security Council to argue its case.

The Government of Israel has no right to exploit the international campaign against terrorism as a stalking horse to implement its policy against the people whose lands it occupies. Mixing up the Haifa bombing with an action against Syria or linking it with the State terrorism practised by Israel is a contravention of the norms of international law. No crime can be justified by the commission of an even more serious crime.

Israel has all along rejected all forms of international advice. It has also completely disregarded the advice and warnings of the Secretary-General and of his Representative in southern Lebanon. The danger of these violations and the disregard for the United Nations remarks constitute flagrant acts of aggression against peace and stability along the Blue Line, which is a strategic line that represents the strategic position of Lebanon, Syria and the Arab Group to reach a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region, as reflected in the Arab peace initiative adopted at the Beirut Arab summit.

Lebanon requests the Security Council to fully meet its responsibilities and take the proper measures to condemn Israel and deter it from committing acts of aggression, violations and the constant threats that have become a daily routine against Lebanon. Israel is doing all those things without any real grounds or reasons, except to mislead Israeli public opinion by fleeing to the front and exporting its domestic crisis outside Israel and to give world public opinion the false impression that it is a victim of aggression.

The letters that my Government has repeatedly addressed in the past to the Secretariat and to the Security Council constitute clear proof of the fact that Israel's intentions are aggressive and not defensive. Israel's violations of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and of international agreements are the cause of pain, anguish, misery, evil and turbulence throughout the Middle East. The tactics pursued by Israel to justify its presence in neighbouring countries are known to all. But if the Government of Israel wants to send a message of terrorism and intimidation to Lebanon and Syria, it has missed the mark. These actions by Israel will further fuel the cycle of violence in which that country will itself become trapped.

Lebanon hopes that the international community will lay bare the true nature of these Israeli practices, bring them to an end and strongly condemn them, just as it should condemn those who order them and implement them. Lebanon also hopes and expects that the Security Council will condemn Israel's aggression against another peaceful Syrian village, just as it condemned the Israeli air force's attacks against many peaceful villages and towns in Lebanon.

Given the current practices of the Israeli Government, which can only be described as reckless, and given its blind violence, the Security Council should not compromise all its peace efforts. More than ever before, the Council has a clear responsibility today to rein in Israel's wholly illegitimate acts of aggression.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank you, Mr. President, for having agreed so promptly to the request of the Arab Group to hold this open meeting to consider an event of extreme gravity that has imperiled international peace and security just a few days after many world leaders came to the United Nations to reaffirm their adherence to international law, the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations and the system of collective security embodied by the Security Council. I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of your duties as President of the Council for the month of October. I also wish to congratulate the representative of the United Kingdom for his outstanding performance as President of the Council last month.

An exceptionally grave Israeli act of aggression has taken place today against a sovereign State and member of the Organization, the Syrian Arab Republic. This is a prime example of a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law, the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the disengagement agreement that has linked two countries since 1974. This act of aggression is particularly serious given that it is taking place in an atmosphere of extreme tension that is affecting a region made fragile

by the policy of terror and repression practised by Israel in occupied Arab territories.

This flagrant violation of the territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic is a new stage in the policy of escalation and flight pursued by the Israeli regime, which is designed to end the peace process that the Quartet is working hard to relaunch and to ruin any opportunities for peace in the region.

Given that risky policy, which could send the entire region into a spiral of violence whose consequences are unpredictable, it is very important that the international community adopt a firm and vigilance attitude and condemn in the strongest terms this new Israeli challenge to the Security Council and international law. Complacency of any kind would only encourage Israel to practice its irredentist policy and to continue to trample Security Council resolutions and norms of international law.

Algeria, which today condemned through the spokesman of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs this act of military aggression wishes to reiterate its full solidarity with the fraternal Syrian people and emphasizes that only a just comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, based on the principle of land for peace and the exercise of the legitimate rights of all peoples of the region, including those of the Palestinians to establish an independent State, will enable this part of the world to regain peace, stability and prosperity.

Given this aggression against a sovereign State, in violation of international law, my delegation expects that the Security Council will adopt the firmest position, condemn unreservedly this aggression and force Israel to abide by international law and to respect Security Council resolutions.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I wish to add my voice to those have already done so in expressing our full confidence in you, Sir, as President of the Council this month. I also wish to congratulate Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry for a very determined and innovative presidency last month.

Syria, a fraternal country and member of the Council, was a victim of Israel's recourse to the use of force, in violation of the Charter. Article 2, paragraph 4 of the Charter calls on all Member States to refrain from the use of force against the territorial integrity or the political independence of any State. The Israeli attack that took place last night or this morning was a flagrant violation of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The fact is there. No one is denying it. That fact cannot be the object of the sole legal justification envisaged by the Charter — legitimate self-defence. If words still have meaning and if international law still exists, the concept of legitimate self-defence has nothing to do with the deliberate attack against Syrian territory.

Striking because a reprehensible, odious and unacceptable act was committed in Haifa recalls times of sad memories when blind, collective punishment took the place of justice. In any case, we would be far from the principles of the Charter and the fundamental standards of international law.

Therefore, if the facts are evident, it is the responsibility of the Council to take note of them and to determine if they pertain to Chapter VII of the Charter — namely aggression, a breach of the peace or a threat to peace — and then to take the measures required of the Council as the organ primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Kingdom of Morocco can only express its alarm at the escalation of violence in the Middle East, an escalation that runs the risk of including all countries of the region, and beyond that endangering peace and security in the world. We sincerely hope that the Council will take the appropriate measures to stop this escalation by requiring Israel to respect the sovereignty of its neighbours and their territorial integrity, particularly of Syria, to which the Kingdom of Morocco expresses its full solidarity.

The President: I call on the representative of Jordan.

Mr. Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month. We wish you every success in leading the deliberations of the Council. We also express our appreciation to His Excellency Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry for his impressive presidency of the Council last month. I also wish to thank you, Sir, for convening this emergency meeting.

The convening of this important meeting at this time to examine the situation in the Middle East is a clear manifestation of the Security Council's recognition of the grave developments that have taken place in the our region that will endanger the peace process and will lead to bloodshed.

The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan strongly condemns the aerial attack by Israel this morning against the Syrian Arab Republic.

International law in this regard is very clear. No party can act outside of the jurisdiction of Article 2, paragraph 4 of the Charter, which prohibits the use of force except in two cases. The first case is if the use of force is used under Article 51 of the Charter, which reflects the principle of self-defence. However, the exercise of that right on the part of any State is conditioned on a prior armed attack against it. The second case is if the Security Council authorizes the use of force under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Neither case applies in this matter. The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan calls upon Israel to cease forthwith using force and any forms of violence, comply with international law and respect the sovereignty of all States of the region.

The President: I call on the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Aboul-Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council is meeting following the attack, which means that the Council must now carry out its responsibilities, strongly condemn that act of aggression and take steps to ensure that it does not recur.

I should like to read out a statement issued today in Cairo by our Minister for Foreign Affairs. That statement reads as follows:

> "The international community is endeavouring to achieve a just and peaceful settlement in the Middle East in the context of peace and security for all peoples. At present, Israel continues to escalate the situation and has even attacked Syrian territory. This inflames tension and could broaden the sphere of violence and counter-violence.
>
> "The Arab Republic of Egypt condemns this new act of aggression, which is part and parcel of Israel's usual policies. It expresses its solidarity with the people of Syria, who remain committed to international legality. Egypt calls upon the international community to oppose this new act of aggression and to ensure that the situation in the Middle East does not deteriorate.
>
> "We condemn all acts of aggression perpetrated against civilians, including the attack carried out yesterday in Haifa."

Israel's continued provocative and aggressive acts against the Arab States of the region should cause the international community to use its powers in order to bring about lasting peace. The entire world understands that Israel must withdraw from all territories occupied since 1967 and that an independent Palestinian State must be established, living side by side with Israel in peace and security. Such a settlement — on which negotiations must resume immediately — would be consistent with the principles of international law and common sense, and would be in the interest of all peoples. Any delay in reaching such a settlement will cause further civilian victims on both sides and will be a loss of precious time for people who seek prosperity and development.

Today, the international community has an opportunity to reassert its engagement and to condemn the adventurists, who will bring only suffering to the peoples of the region. A firm position must be taken today for the sake of the tomorrow we wish to build together. Stern measures must be adopted today to avert further years of suffering. A strong consensus will open the way for hope, and will convince the adventurists that they are harbouring illusions that only perpetuate aggression. They will have to renounce the desire to hold on to the territory of others. Peace must reign.

Today the Israeli representative told the Council that on this day 30 years ago Egypt and Syria attacked Israel. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel made a similar statement today; he spoke of unprovoked Egyptian-Syrian aggression. I cannot fail to recall that the Egyptian-Syrian military action across the Suez Canal was legitimate and had the clear-cut goal of regaining Egyptian territory in the Sinai at a time when Israel was insisting on retaining the Sinai. Egypt's action was in full conformity with the United Nations Charter and with the right of self-defence. It took place within Egyptian territory and on Egyptian territory.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Tunisia.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency for the month of October. My appreciation goes to Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry for the way in which he guided the work of the Council last month. My delegation thanks you, Mr. President, for having responded so quickly to the request to convene this meeting to discuss recent events in the Middle East.

Tunisia learned with grave concern of Israel's act of aggression against fraternal Syria. We condemn that act of aggression and stand in solidarity with Syria. We believe it threatens a serious escalation and violates international law. It poses a threat to regional security and constitutes a violation of resolution 338 (1973). It is a flagrant violation of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Furthermore, Tunisia vigorously deplores the violation of Lebanese air space in the commission of this aggression against Syria.

Tunisia believes that this unjustified act of aggression will further complicate the situation in the region and will bring further escalation, violence and destabilization. Here, Tunisia appeals to the Israeli Government to halt such acts of provocation so as to prevent the region from being caught up in a cycle of violence. We call on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities and to take urgent and forceful measures to prevent the escalation of the situation.

My delegation cannot fail to welcome the responsible position taken by the Government of Syria, rejecting the logic of violence in the face of Israeli escalation. The Council should take this into account.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month, and to convey our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry.

As members of the Council know, Israeli warplanes attacked a site north of Damascus, the capital of sisterly Syria. There is no doubt whatsoever that this marks new Israeli aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria. It is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law. In the course of this action against Syria, Israel also violated Lebanese air space — which constitutes aggression against yet another Arab country.

Today's action may be added to the long list of acts of Israeli military aggression against many Arab countries, and confirms Israel's determination to use aggression and force and to violate international law. We vigorously deplore and condemn this most recent Israeli aggression against Syria and call upon the Security Council to join in vigorously condemning it. We call upon the Council to demand that Israel cease such acts of aggression and such violations of international law, as set out in the Arab draft resolution that has been placed before the Council.

The Israeli aggression threatens to extend the cycle of confrontation to the entire Middle East, adding to the great dangers that we already face in that region. We speak today as the victims of systematized Israeli aggression and of the bloody Israeli campaign against us of the past three years, including repeated war crimes. We are victims of settler colonization, expansionist policies and the denial of our national right to an independent Palestinian State with its capital in East Jerusalem.

Despite long years of colonization, we take the position of responsibility in standing against all illegal acts undertaken from our occupied territories against civilians in Israel. On that basis, the Palestinian leadership condemned the suicide bombing that took place yesterday in the city of Haifa and called for the full and immediate cessation of such acts.

On the other side, Israel must admit that such acts are the consequences of colonization and of its policies and actions, and not vice-versa. Israel must also stop linking its dirty acts to the international community's struggle against terrorism. Israel must also cease its illegal campaigns, including its building of a wall around our country; its threatening the life of the Palestinian leader, elected by the Palestinian people; and its intimidation of Arab countries, including sisterly Syria.

The President: I now call on the representative of Kuwait.

Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this

month. I wish you every success in conducting our deliberations.

I would be remiss if I failed to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for his leadership of the Council last month.

We appreciate your swift response to the request of the Arab Group to convene this meeting. Such celerity is based in the Council's belief that Israel's act of aggression today against a State member of the Security Council represents a grave threat to international peace and security. Kuwait condemns Israel's violation of Lebanon's and Syria's airspaces and its attack against Syrian territory by targeting a civilian site in the village of Ein Saheb. The statement issued by our Prime Minister stressed our condemnation of that act of aggression, which violates the principles of international law and the fundamental principles of the United Nations.

We welcome the statement made by Secretary-General Kofi Annan on this grave escalation and we share his concern that the deterioration of the situation in the region could presage further threats to regional peace and security. Such provocative and unwarranted acts of aggression by Israel fall within the context of its ongoing efforts to undermine the peace process by setting up obstacles to the implementation of the road map of the Quartet. Such acts also prove the fact that the Israeli Government is not serious about achieving a permanent peace in the Middle East and will bring further violence to the region.

Israel's acts of aggression, by they in the occupied Palestinian territories or in neighbouring Arab States, will not achieve its desired sense of security. Israel should stop shirking its responsibilities and international commitments. We call on Israel to commit itself to the obligations it has already assumed, including those under Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as to the principle of land for peace. Israel should also implement the road map, with all its obligations, and withdraw from all the territories it occupied in 1967.

Kuwait stands in full solidarity with the Syrian Arab Republic in defying the act of aggression committed today. Kuwait supports the measures to be taken in defence of the territorial integrity of Syria and calls on the Security Council to assume its responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council must condemn this escalation and call on Israel to refrain from such acts, which threaten regional and international security and will further exacerbate an already explosive situation in the Middle East.

The President: I call on the representative of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I join with those who have congratulated you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. We are optimistic that your wisdom and experience will help you in conducting the Council's business as we all would wish.

I also extend appreciation and thanks to your predecessor, the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, for guiding the Council's work last month.

Once again, Israel has affirmed its disregard for international law and norms. Once again, it has affirmed that it does not care about any agreement, convention or international legality. The Israeli air force has committed an unprovoked aggression against a civilian site in Syria that posed no threat or danger to anybody. Israel's violation of Lebanese and Syrian airspaces and its aggression against Syrian territory is a blatant contravention of international law and norms, confirming the aggressive, terrorist nature of the Israeli Government.

The Israeli Government is resorting to every pretext to export its internal crises, terrorizing and intimidating the countries of the region and pursuing its continued aggression against the Palestinians and repressive practices in the occupied territories. The Israeli Government is trying to confuse everybody, wrecking havoc on the region and raising tensions in a very volatile situation.

We agree with the statement made by the Secretary-General in which he denounced the Israeli aggression and warned against escalation in a region that is already extremely tense and against a rising danger that may be difficult to contain. We need to implement the road map through the Quartet's insistence on the implementation of all its provisions with due impartiality.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia denounces Israel's aggression against sisterly Syria. This aggression is a provocation that may undermine the peace process in the area. It threatens international and regional security.

and represents a dangerous deterioration of the situation in the region.

Saudi Arabia, while affirming its solidarity with the position of Syria — which has showed great restraint in the face of this aggression — calls upon the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security by condemning the Israeli aggression and by putting an end to this organized State terrorism, to the inhumane practices of the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian people and to its aggression against Syria and Lebanon. In order to maintain peace and security in the region, it must not repeat its act of aggression.

The President: I now call on the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Rodriguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency and to express my gratitude for the presidency of Ambassador Jones Parry.

The delegation of Cuba strongly condemns the military attack launched by Israel on 5 October against the Syrian Arab Republic in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the very resolutions of the Security Council. An act of aggression has been committed, in the light of which the Council must exercise its functions under the mandate of the Charter.

The Security Council has the duty to prevent a dangerous escalation in the Middle East conflict. Approximately 3,600 people — nearly 2,800 of them innocent Palestinian civilians — have died since September 2000. A wall is being built to segregate the Palestinian people. There are repeated violations of airspace and attacks against southern Lebanon. The provocations and slanderous statements against Syria are increasing.

While we reiterate our condemnation of suicide bombings against Israeli civilians — who continue to be innocent victims of the spiral of violence caused by their Government's policy — Cuba rejects the use of such individual actions to attempt to justify State terrorism against Syria and Lebanon and atrocities perpetrated by an army that possesses the most modern and lethal means for indiscriminately killing targeted persons as well as numerous other victims.

The veto of the United States — repeated 37 times — has thus far prevented Security Council resolutions from being implemented, has prevented Chapter VI of the Charter from being invoked, has prevented appropriate actions from being taken to ensure Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied territories, and has prevented peace from being restored in the Middle East.

Cuba confirms its full support for the cause of the Arab peoples against Israeli occupation and aggression, and we express our deeply felt solidarity with their resistance. A just and lasting peace cannot be achieved in the Middle East unless there is an end to Israeli occupation, unless the Palestinian people can exercise their legitimate right to establish an independent State with its capital in East Jerusalem, until there is a return of all the occupied territories, until Israel withdraws from the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Syrian Golan back to the line held on 4 June 1967. There will not be peace until the Israeli provocations in southern Lebanon cease, until the rights of the Palestinian refugees are guaranteed and until the illegal Israeli settlements are eliminated, in conformity with Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): I should like to join previous speakers in expressing our felicitations to you, Sir, on having assumed the presidency of the Security Council and to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry, on the excellent way he conducted the work of the Council last month. I also wish to thank you for having convened this urgent Council meeting.

The Israeli violation of Lebanese territory and airspace and the raid against civilian centres in Syria, causing destruction and casualties, is a further random act in the course of the incessant Israeli aggression against Arab countries and the Palestinian people. It clearly represents Israeli persistence in the pursuit of a policy of State terrorism, which must be vigorously condemned. No justification or pretext can be accepted for such a policy of reckless recourse to armed aggression, which represents a clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the most basic principles of international law.

This aggression represents a serious escalation at a time when tension is running high in the region. The raid further deteriorates the situation and threatens to broaden the scope of violence. It is in line with the

policy of escalation that the Israeli regime has pursued all along with a view to holding on to the Palestinian and Arab lands it has continued to occupy for decades. That is nothing but playing with fire in a region already scarred by decades of aggression and occupation by Israel.

My delegation rejects the baseless fabrication against my country presented in the Council today. But it is evident that no amount of slander, deception and smear campaigns by Israel can cloud the obvious: that the Sharon regime has engaged in a systematic campaign of provocation and escalation, from desecration of holy places to targeted murder of Palestinian leaders, in order to obliterate any prospect for peace.

However, this new adventure is all the more ominous, because it clearly indicates the fact that Israel, in its manoeuvring to continue its policy of occupation through escalation and provocation, is running out of options. It is attacking Arab countries in the belief that that will enable it to get out of the impasse it has created for itself. This new course of action, if unchecked, will drag the entire region into a downward spiral of violence, as it is designed to do. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has already condemned this act of aggression — which is an integral part of the provocative and aggressive Israeli policy — and expressed its full solidarity with the Government and the people of Syria and the Government and the people of Lebanon.

We call on the international community, represented by this body, to impose restraints on the Israeli regime, whose actions are a threat to peace and stability in the Middle East. It is unfortunate that the Security Council, bearing primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, has thus far been prevented from shouldering its responsibility with regard to the crisis in the Middle East. There is no doubt that the impunity that Israel enjoys emboldens it to perpetrate its policy of aggression and occupation. Thus we urge the Council to take decisive action this time on this new, alarming aggression. This is especially necessary in the light of further threats by Israel to launch more attacks on Syria.

The President: I now call on the representative of Bahrain.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to sincerely congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I should also like to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ambassador Jones Parry, for his success in conducting the work of the Council last month. We thank you for promptly convening this emergency Security Council meeting to examine the dangerous situation that has arisen in the region.

The Security Council is holding this emergency meeting in the shadow of the dangerous developments threatening the peace and security in the Middle East and stemming from the current Israel's Government's policy of war, with unforeseeable consequences. The Israeli attack against sisterly Syria is a dangerous escalation of violence that threatens international and regional security. It is a violation of the United Nations Charter and international law and is in defiance of all the agreements, conventions and principles of international law. Israel's actions today offer a textbook example of the foregoing. As if it were not enough to conduct a policy of violence against the defenceless Palestinian people, the Israeli Government, through its policy of provocation, went on to launch an attach attack against a Member State and current non-permanent member of the Security Council.

My country condemns the Israeli raid against the Syrian Arab Republic and its violation of Lebanese and Syrian airspace. My country deplores this blatant aggression and the gross violation of international legality and the laws on the sovereignty of States. We denounce any action conducive to war.

The current Israeli Government is called on to desist from its current policy, which has dragged the region into a cycle of violence and tension. It must exercise reason and wisdom rather than engage the language of war and aggression against others. It must respect the principles of international law, including respect for the sovereignty of States in the region.

Here, I would like to pay tribute to the policy of restraint adopted by the Syrian Arab Republic in the face of aggression. Syria believes that international forums are the best recourse and far preferable to a language of war that victimizes people.

Finally, the Kingdom of Bahrain calls on the Security Council to apply the Charter against aggressor

countries. We call on the international community to take every measure to pressure Israel to stop the practices that are undermining all peace efforts and threatening stability and security in the region.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Mr. El-Treki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would also like to express to you, Sir, our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We wish you every success in your work. We would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, the representative of the United Kingdom, for the efforts he made last month to make the work of the Council a success.

We meet today not for the first time – and it will not be the last – to discuss Israeli aggression against a State member of the Security Council. Israel's aggressive nature and years-long exercise of State terrorism have continued unabated without any decision taken to address the problem. Because of Security Council inaction, aggression and political assassinations have continued, as has occupation of land. Syrian land too is still occupied because of Israeli aggression.

I am not saying that this is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, for Israel has never respected the Charter or any Security Council resolutions. Perhaps we might now have an opportunity to stop such aggression and an aggressor that has been exercising State terrorism, which, owing to the lack of constraints and measures to stop Israel from carrying out terrorist acts, has promoted the spread of international terrorism. Syria is a victim today. Palestine is another victim. No one knows who will be the next victim.

I would like to mention in particular the friends of Israel. We must speak frankly with Israel. We should not believe Israel. We should tell the Israelis that continued aggression, assassinations and occupation will not result in the achievement of a sense of security for Israel. The entire question of security for Israel, the only guarantee of security for Israel, lies in its abiding by international resolutions, recognizing the rights of the Palestinian people, withdrawing from occupied Arab territories and putting an end to the State terrorism that it exercises. Security cannot be achieved through aggression. Despite the conditions that encourage such aggression, it must end. I believe that the Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, must put an end to such aggression.

We express our support for and solidarity with sisterly Syria. We stand with Syria and Lebanon to confront such aggression. No peace and no end to terrorism can be achieved so long as people continue to live under occupation and State terrorism is exercised not just for self-defence but for the sake of occupation and aggression.

We hope that the Council will rise to its responsibilities, at least for once. It must say that aggression must be stopped and condemned. The Charter must be applied to Israelis, as it is to other people. Only than can we end aggression and occupation. We are certain that the Council is capable of doing so, if it can muster the will and a sense of responsibility towards the members.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Alsaidi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. We are confident that your well-known wisdom will help the Council reach the objective for which this meeting has been convened. Allow me also to express our sincere thanks to Sir Emyr Jones Parry, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for the wise manner in which he conduced the deliberations of the Security Council last month.

Israeli forces committed an unprecedented act of aggression this morning in an attempt to drag Arab States into military confrontation and to mask the heinous crimes perpetrated by the Israeli Government against Palestinians, in the hopes that such an action would draw the region into further conflict. This is an act of aggression whose like we have not seen against the Syrian Arab Republic in 30 years. Israel has failed to suppress the Palestinian intifada, so it has tirelessly endeavoured to export its internal crisis to neighbouring States. What is truly regrettable, however, is that Israel has not yet understood that a just and comprehensive solution, the establishment of a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital and Israeli withdrawal from occupied Syrian and Lebanese territory constitute the solution that will prevent any

further bloodshed and war in the region. Israel's act of aggression against the Syrian Arab Republic is a challenge to international law and to internationally binding resolutions calling on Israel to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories. The Republic of Yemen therefore condemns that act of aggression. Yemen also expresses its solidarity with its brothers in the Syrian Arab Republic and in the Lebanese Republic.

We call upon the international community, and primarily upon the Security Council and the United Nations, to condemn this senseless act of aggression. We also call upon them to adopt resolution to deter any further premeditated escalation by Israel. In our view, such escalation would pose an ominous threat to peace and stability in the region.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to convey our congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. We are confident that your wisdom will guide the Council to the attainment of all our expectations. I would also like to thank your predecessor, Sir Emyr Jones Parry, the Permanent Representative of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for his efforts during the month of September. We further wish to thank the members of the Council for their speedy response to the request made by the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon to hold an emergency meeting of the Security Council to consider the dangerous escalation of aggression perpetrated by Israeli forces against sites in the Syrian Arab Republic and Israeli violation of Lebanese air space.

The Foreign Ministry of Qatar issued a statement this morning in which it condemned the raid launched by Israeli forces against sites in Syria. We consider those actions a grave threat to peace and security in the Middle East that could drag the region back to war and tension. My country reaffirms that it stands by the sisterly Syrian Arab Republic. We call on the international community to bring pressure to bear on Israel to cease its aggression and commit itself to implement internationally binding resolutions calling on it to withdraw from all occupied Arab territory.

Israel's aggression against Syria is in clear defiance of all international rules and laws. It is also a clear violation of the Disengagement Agreement between Syrian and Israeli forces. It also affirms Israel's desire to export its internal crisis by waging wider war in the guise of combating terrorism.

My country has joined the list of sponsors of the draft resolution that has been submitted to the Council. We are confident that, given the very delicate circumstances, the Council will be able to assume its full responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Sir, I would like to congratulate you, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We are fully confident of your ability and wisdom. We would also like to thank Sir Emyr Jones Parry, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for the wise way in which he conducted the work of the Council last month.

We have returned to the Security Council for the second time in less than a month because of Israel's repeated violations of international law. God only knows how long and how often we will have to continue to come to the Council.

My delegation has followed with great concern Israel's violation of Syrian and Lebanese air space and its acts of aggression against the territory of both countries that targeted a civilian site north-west of Syria's capital, Damascus, and that caused material damage. My delegation considers that act of aggression to be a dangerous escalation that could threaten international peace and security and make an already bad situation vulnerable to incalculable and uncontrollable repercussions. At the same time, my delegation also condemns Israel's aggression against Lebanese and Syrian territories, which we consider yet one more in a long series of Israeli violations of international norms and law and instances of Israeli contempt for international legitimacy.

My delegation reaffirms its support for, and solidarity with, the Syrian Arab Republic. We also reaffirm its right to self-defence and to respond to this act of aggression.

My delegation further asks the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility and to intervene immediately to prevent Israel from continuing its provocative acts of aggression against Syria, against

the Palestinian people and against neighbouring Arab countries. My delegation reaffirms that is necessary to abide by the provisions of the United Nations Charter and by international law.

The blatant aggression committed this morning is not an isolated event. It was preceded by another such act on 8 January in the demilitarized zone between Syria and Israel. Now Israel has once again returned to its previous behaviour by committing another act this morning. The Security Council is called upon to take the necessary measures to ensure that Israel does not continue its terrorist acts, and that it returns to its senses and understands that its security lies in withdrawing from the land it occupies and putting an end to its acts of aggression against the Palestinian people and its attacks against neighbouring Arab countries.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I regret having to take the floor again. However, this afternoon the Council heard unfounded lies, through which the Israeli representative tried to divert our attention from the reason for which the Council met: the Israeli violation of the air space of Syria and Lebanon and the acts of aggression committed against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a State member of the Security Council and of the United Nations. Is there an insolence that can exceed what we have already witnessed? This Israeli style of prevarication is not new to us. We know about Israel's unfounded lies, and we know about Israeli attempts to distort facts and realities. That is the pattern we have come to expect from Israel, from 1948 to this very moment.

I will not respond to the unfounded lies perpetrated and promoted by the representative of the Israeli war Government, because the statements that were included in his statement simply deserve to be thrown into the Council's wastepaper basket. The logic promoted by the Israeli representative is the logic and the reasoning of a gang, not that of a responsible party. What is even more arrogant in what we have heard today is that he came here to preach to us about Israel's history of respecting international legitimacy, despite the fact that each and every of us here knows very well that that history is not exactly honourable. We would have greatly preferred to have him tell us the reasons for the Israeli failure to implement the scores — or even more than scores — of resolutions adopted by the United Nations, including by the Security Council, with regard to Israel ever since the State of Israel was established.

That representative chose to ignore the main reason behind the catastrophes and disasters which our region faces. He chose to ignore the blood-letting — by that I mean Israel's insistence on occupying Arab territories, its daily acts of aggression against the Palestinian civilians and its acts of aggression against Arab States, the last of which we have witnessed this morning. The Israeli continued occupation is the reason for the presence of hundreds of thousands, if not say millions of Palestinians in Syria and in other Arab lands. It is also needless to recall that the presence of those refugees was supposed to be temporary until the circumstances allowed them to go back to their country from which they were expelled by Israel and whereby they were replaced by illegitimate settlers and illegitimate settlements, things that this Council has rejected more than once.

The Palestinian field leadership is in the Palestinian territories. Its just logical to say that for tactical and geographic reasons the Palestinians who reside in Syria cannot plan for operations that take place on Palestinian territories. Therefore, accusing Syria with what the Israeli representative chose to term as giving refuge to terrorist organizations is only a desperate attempt to get out of the dead-end that Israel finds itself in and, as I say, an attempt by Israel to export its internal crises beyond its borders.

Nothing hurts international action against terrorism more than Israeli acts of aggression and the killing of Palestinians under the pretext of combating terrorism. Israel chooses to ignore the fact that it — and only it — was the first to introduce the concept of terrorism into our region through crimes committed by the Stern and the Haganah: gangs that were in fact the nucleus of the Israeli army. Some of their members are still wanted in Great Britain to this very day because of the acts of terror they committed. They became Prime Ministers and other high officials in Israel. Do members remember the assassination by those gangs of Count Bernadotte, the international mediator; do members remember the carnage and the massacres of Deir Yassin and Qana; do members remember the massacres of Sabra and Shatila; do members remember the role of General Sharon, the current Israeli Prime Minister in those massacres? We marked the anniversary of these massacres just a few days ago.

In combating terrorism, Syria stands side by side with all the other countries of the world. We frankly believe that this is what we should really do, that this is the correct course of action. Has not Syria cooperated with all with all the other countries of the world, including the United States in combating terrorism? Has not Syria saved lives, as recognized by United States Administration officials? Were we in fact on the wrong side when we cooperated in that field? We do not believe that this is the case. The responsibility of one permanent member in the Security Council and a co-sponsor of the peace process makes it incumbent on that party to adopt balanced positions that do not encourage acts of aggression and that do not accept any such acts, but that would deter the commission of such acts.

I would like to refer briefly to the comments that the representative of Israel made about democracy and respect for human rights, among other issues. The Israeli record with regard to democratic practices is very well known to all of us. Israel demonstrates its respect for the rights of the Palestinian people at checkpoints, in the building of the fence and in the demolition of the houses of civilians while their inhabitants are still inside. Such actions provide evidence of the Israeli attitude to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other instruments of international humanitarian law, which we are all seeking to respect.

Is that truly respect for human rights? Do States members of the Council believe in Israel's unique way of showing respect for human rights? I say to Israel that the members of the Council would not accept such notions.

In conclusion, I would like to thank those who condemned the Israeli act of aggression against my country. In doing so they expressed their support for the Charter and for international legitimacy. That is the right course of action to take in the interests of the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to continue our discussion of the subject in informal consultations.

The meeting rose at 7.55 p.m.